

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1 1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of facilitating a
2 distributed search for a procurement request, comprising:
3 receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement
4 request is subject to organizational procurement controls;
5 requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the
6 procurement request;
7 initiating a local search of a local information source;
8 receiving results of the remote search;
9 filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational
10 procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein the
11 organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a
12 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
13 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
14 payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an
15 electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be
16 applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier;
17 merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and
18 presenting said merged search results to the user.

- 1 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 filtering said remote search results with a set of local rules.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said filtering comprises
2 editing said remote search results according to a set of rules regarding information
3 that may be presented to the user.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 selecting said remote information source from multiple information
3 sources.

1 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search is
2 conducted without the user being connected to the remote information source.

1 6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the remote information
2 source employs a user interface different from a user interface employed by the
3 local information source.

1 7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said presenting comprises
2 displaying said merged search results with the user interface employed by the
3 local information source.

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said requesting comprises
2 identifying to the remote information source a context in which to execute the
3 remote search.

1 9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an
2 identity of the user.

1 10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an
2 identity of an organization operating the local information source.

1 11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises a
2 language.

1 12 (Canceled).

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search and said
2 local search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1 14. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing
2 instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a
3 computer-implemented method of facilitating a distributed search for a
4 procurement request, the method comprising:

5 | receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement
6 request is subject to organizational procurement controls;

7 | requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the
8 procurement request;

9 | initiating a local search of a local information source;

10 | receiving results of the remote search;

11 | filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational
12 procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein the
13 organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a
14 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
15 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
16 payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an
17 electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be
18 applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier;

19 | merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and
20 | presenting said merged search results to the user.

1 15. (Currently amended) A method of conducting a distributed electronic
2 | search for a procurement request concerning a desired procurement item, wherein
3 | the procurement request is subject to organizational procurement controls,
4 comprising:

5 receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;
6 issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items
7 matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement
8 information source;

9 providing the remote procurement information source with contextual
10 information for said first search;

11 performing a second search of a local procurement system for items
12 matching said description;

13 receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;
14 | filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement
15 controls to the first set of results of the remote search, wherein the organizational
16 procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a price, an upper
17 limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to a given brand,
18 a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on payment
19 terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an electronic
20 marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be applied to
21 the first set of results of the remote search which is performed by the remote
22 supplier; and

23 presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results
24 and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

1 16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2 authenticating one or more of the user and the local procurement
3 information system to the remote procurement information source.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2 selecting the remote procurement information source from a set of
3 procurement information sources.

1 18. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said issuing comprises
2 providing the remote procurement information source with information for
3 identifying a context in which to execute the requested search.

1 19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said filtering comprises
2 removing from said first set of results any items that violate the procurement
3 rules.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the procurement rules are
2 designed to restrict items that may be procured by the user.

1 21. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said first search and said
2 second search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1 22. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing
2 instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a
3 method of conducting a distributed electronic search for a procurement request
4 concerning a desired procurement item, wherein the procurement request is
5 subject to organizational procurement controls, the method comprising:
6 receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;
7 issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items
8 matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement
9 information source;

10 providing the remote procurement information source with contextual
11 information for said first search;
12 performing a second search of a local procurement system for items
13 matching said description;
14 receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;
15 filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement
16 controls to the first set of results of the remote search, wherein the organizational
17 procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a price, an upper
18 limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to a given brand,
19 a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on payment
20 terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an electronic
21 marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be applied to
22 the first set of results of the remote search which is performed by the remote
23 supplier; and
24 presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results
25 and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

1 23. (Currently amended) A system for facilitating a distributed search for
2 information for a procurement request, wherein the procurement request is subject
3 to organizational procurement controls, comprising:
4 a local information source configured to provide information to local users
5 through a first user interface;
6 a communication module configured to enable said local information
7 source to communicate with a remote supplier, wherein the remote supplier is
8 configured to provide information to users through a second user interface
9 different from the first user interface;
10 a set of rules regarding information that may be displayed to a first local
11 user; and

12 a processor configured to initiate, in response to a request from the first
13 local user:
14 a remote search of the remote information source; and
15 a local search of said local information source;
16 | wherein results of said remote search are filtered by applying the
17 organizational procurement controls to the results of the remote search, wherein
18 the organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a
19 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
20 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
21 payment terms, and wherein the remote information source comprises an
22 electronic marketplace, whereby the organizational procurement controls can be
23 applied to results of the remote search which is performed by the remote supplier
24 and then merged with results of said local search for display to the first local user
25 through the first user interface.

1 24. (Original) The system of claim 23, further comprising:
2 authentication means for authenticating one or more of the system and the
3 first local user to the remote information source.

1 25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said remote search and
2 said local search are performed in parallel.